

# THE STUDENT VOICE

SPRING SEMESTER: March 2017



**Photo: Amber Johnson; at the Rome Campus ribbon cutting**

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## Carson Evans



### **A Night at the Tram; Utica's Poetry Night and What You've Been Missing**

After attending poetry night at the Tramontane Café many times over the course of several years I have observed some of the new faces in the crowd and their experiences upon attending and reading at their first poetry night.

It's seven thirty in the evening, I am at the Tramontane Café on Lincoln Ave.; the host of the night, Utica Poet's Society member, Mike Cecconi shuffles up to the mic in his socks towering above the microphone at six foot something, he brandishes his clipboard littered with stickers: "315LIVE.COM", "WAGE LOVE" and "OCR" taking up prime real estate, covering the edges of other, older stickers. Cecconi gives a typical welcome and then launches into a poem he had written, extending his arm as much as he can, locking his elbow, he leans back away from the microphone and begins shouting the content of his clipboard. At the perfect pivotal moments his shouts dim to whispers and

rise back to a normal volume only to once more be proclaimed as if from the rooftop. The Tram fills with his bellowing voice as members of the audience sip their coffee from oversized mismatched mugs and listen intently while others whom are only bystanders to the event stir their tea, carrying on conversations in low voices in an attempt to not intrude on the reading. He concludes and depending on the political leanings of the audience members reaction varies from impassioned applause to polite acknowledgment. Regardless of their opinions though there is a feeling of consensus that his presence demands your attention.

A young girl enters, a shock of short pale pastel hair hangs over her eyes. As a first-time attendee of poetry night, she finds herself scanning for an empty seat among a sea of unfamiliar faces, faces that unbeknownst to her now will soon become dear friends. The

armchairs on either side of the lamp just behind the kitchen allow her to sink so deeply her shoulders become level with her elbows as she sips her latte and listens to the current poem being recited into the microphone. Eventually she works up the nerve to sign up to read, she makes her way to the end of the bar to write in her name. She selects her favorite color sharpie and signs up for round one or two or perhaps both if she's prepared enough material; she makes her way back to her seat and waits with anxious excitement for her name to be called. She hopes her handwriting is legible as Cecconi makes his way back to the mic. Several other poets read their work aloud and she listens intently, applauding with the rest of the crowd. She sips her latte once more as her name is called and she fumbles setting the mug down beside her, letting it clank against the glass. She stands, straightening and smoothing her clothing, clutching her moleskine journal as she makes her way to the mic. She introduces herself, and admits that she's a bit nervous as she's never read publicly before. She's barely gotten the words out before applause roars through the café, making her appear to feel instantly validated and at ease. She thanks everyone, and clears her throat as a blush spreads across her

cheeks from their praise and appears to chastise herself for being so nervous. She recites her poems and receives her applause; she thanks the audience and returns to her seat. She seems proud and excited and a thousand other emotions, intoxicated by possibly the first positive public speaking experience of her life; she returns to sipping her drink and tries not to look too obvious but she's still reeling from the sensation. She's shared something personal, something she took the time to write and it was appreciated, she was made to feel welcome and as if she were a part of something. She knows she will definitely be back next week.



## Amber Johnson



### Rome Campus Plumley Complex Expansion Ribbon Cutting Ceremony

On February 10<sup>th</sup> 2017, the ribbon was finally cut officially marking the end of the construction phase of the two-year long process that was the Rome Campus expansion. Although it was an icy cold day in the middle of winter, it was also a joyful day for the city of Rome and for the entire college. It was a particularly exciting day for those who have been working diligently on the expansion. At around 9:30 in the morning, the lobby of the newly remodeled Plumley Complex began to fill up rather quickly. By the time the ceremony began at ten, the room was filled with students, faculty and staff, important city officials, and other bystanders such as myself.

The speeches began and a handful of notable important people, who all had part in the project, gave their own individual thanks and sentiments. All the while, the man whom the building is named after, Jack Plumley himself was sitting dead center in the front row. The speakers included Dean of the Rome Campus Franca Armstrong, Jacqueline Izzo the Mayor of Rome, the President of MVCC Dr. Randall VanWagoner, Senator Joseph Griffo, Chair

of the MVCC Board of Trustees William S. Calli, Jr., Assemblyman Anthony Brindisi, Oneida County Board of Legislators Chairman Gerald Fiorini and Oneida County Executive Anthony Picentre Jr.

Dean Franco Armstrong brought up the idea that Central and Western Oneida County are very lucky and privileged to have a college campus easily accessible to them. Without this Rome campus, it is likely that many students may not even make the drive to Utica to attend. People have their families, jobs and other obligations; having a campus in Rome makes college a viable opportunity for a proper education.

After they unveiled the new plaque for the building, they invited Jack Plumley to cut the ribbon with them. When the ceremony came to an end, a plethora of drinks and food were offered, as well as tours of the new expansion. The tours took you past the new bookstore, as well as the new area for the Hospitality programs. A massive new kitchen and dining room for the culinary classes, and huge new classrooms for the nursing and surgical technician programs that actually place you

in a hospital like setting. MVCC’s mascot “Mo the Hawk” was also walking around enthusiastic as ever, ready to celebrate and take pictures. The excitement for the future of the campus and the students was resonating in the atmosphere. Every single

person in the building was feeling the anticipation for the future of this campus—everyone is anxious and excited to see what comes next for the future of the Rome campus, Mohawk Valley Community College.



## Erika Parker



### National Women's Day

On March 8th, women in the United States celebrated National Women's Day. The participants in the 2017 *'Be Bold For Change'* campaign have been fighting for a gender equal society for decades now. Due to such restrictions, reservation, and discrimination towards women's rights, protestors took the initiative to take a day off from work, paid or unpaid. On this day, women followed the movements of female garment workers participating Women's March back in 1908. Earlier in the year, during January's Women's March, women rallied for gender justice as well. Feminists attending these movements, fight against gender-discrimination, sexual harassment, speak of respecting women, and fight to enhance women's rights.

As a woman, myself, I too often notice my fellow girlfriends, and peers being belittled by their significant other, or by society alone. Today's social norms and demeanors repeatedly degrade the anatomy of a women's human body, and disregard the shouts and cries of those being affected by today's political issues, such as the termination of planned parenthood.

Movements like these motivate and empower women to stand up for equality and allow their stories and statements to be noticed.

We have all had our fair shares of relationships, good and bad, but what we take away from those relationships is what's important. A lot of times, love is blinding, and we choose to see what we please in the moment. However, if we take a moment and look at what's happening from an outside perspective, we typically can change our perspective. I chose to spoke about one of my past relationships in this article as I read about, and became empowered by National Women's Day.

It is late as I am lying there on his grungy mattress. I hear the junkies next door bickering because she smoked his cigarette, followed by a thud on the floor. "Get out of my face or I'll hit you a little harder next time," he assures. As the attic door to their side opens, I know what's coming next. Her eyes filling with tears, the neighbor sits down next to me offering her excuse, "He just needs some alone time, you have a smoke?"

Not only did I not know what I was getting myself into, but also, I never wanted to be so vulnerable. I couldn't help that my heart was so big and that I appreciated their inability to live far from sensible lives. They were good people I thought; actually, they wanted nothing more than to find peace throughout their constant daily struggles. Wanting to save them, I ended up losing my own self.

Undoubtedly, internal struggles will consume and control the person who is battling them. I couldn't bear to see him lose another person in his life; I was his happiness. Out of fear that he would do something irrational, I felt like I could never leave him. Since he came from a broken home with no structure and a heart with no hope, I was afraid that he wouldn't be able to handle it. Losing his father to suicide was hard enough, and using was his repression. I was aware of his past, but I am not one to live in the past. How could I? We loved each other, right? He would never do anything to hurt me, right? Wrong; he destroyed me. Manipulation was his middle name.

Drowning in his demented thoughts and distorted lifestyle, I wanted nothing more than for him to feel joy, but he only dragged my own spirits down. Unemployed, underprivileged, and unambitious, he trapped and manipulated me, until I could barely keep my head above the waters.

For the first six months of my junior year, I couldn't pass a class, yet I have always been a high honors student. I never wanted to go home, yet I was an only child

and my parents have always been the light of my life. I hated my mother for no reason. Everything she did or tried to do infuriated me. Taking off in my car, I would be ridden with guilt after every argument with my mom. As I headed for the monster's house, her heart shattered, my mother watched me tear my family apart for almost a year. A contagious influence, he showed me that love could destroy me, betray me, break me down to my lowest of lows. Could he possibly be worse than any other addiction he had? To tell the truth, I never learned about these types of monsters in health class.

During high school, I have experienced many highs and lows within myself. Allowing all types of monsters to creep in and out of my life, I have learned something from each of them. My prior relationship has helped me to grow despite all the negativity it wrought. Often times, I endure trust issues, but I have learned to accept love again from those who truly care. I learned to always put myself, even if people call you selfish. Although I still find myself building walls, I do not aspire to build these walls. Determined, recovering, and maturing, I am grateful to say that my mother and I are close again. There is not a day that goes by when I do not feel guilty for my past, but you learn to accept and grow from it. To really love someone means that you want the best for them no matter what, but remember to ask yourself "do they want what's best for me, or what's more convenient for them?" I vowed to end this chapter of my life on a high note because the past had passed, and of all the paths we take in life, some of them must be dirt to allow us to grow.

Today, too many women and young girls are faced with psychological manipulation by their partners. Emotions and the agenda of the victim become exploited and accommodated to suit the manipulators lifestyle. Manipulators use the victim's weaknesses against them, especially during detrimental times of the relationship. Often, there is a driving force behind why the individual is physiologically manipulative, but you are not entitled to save or change them. As a partner in your relationship you are entitled to your fundamental human rights and a stable mental health. Your voice in a relationship

should not be silenced, due to the simple fact that relationships are a two-way street. With the ever so changing mentalities of society, women have become more apt to recognizing and standing up to manipulative relationships, and societal standards. It is the movements and organizations that are affiliated with National Women's Day in which women are given the power to acknowledge and react to issues on gender disparity. Even the simplest recognition by women, promote the marginalized issues women face. Among them: gender violence, reproductive freedom, labor rights, and gender justice.



## Kristina Tiderencel



## William Henry Marsh

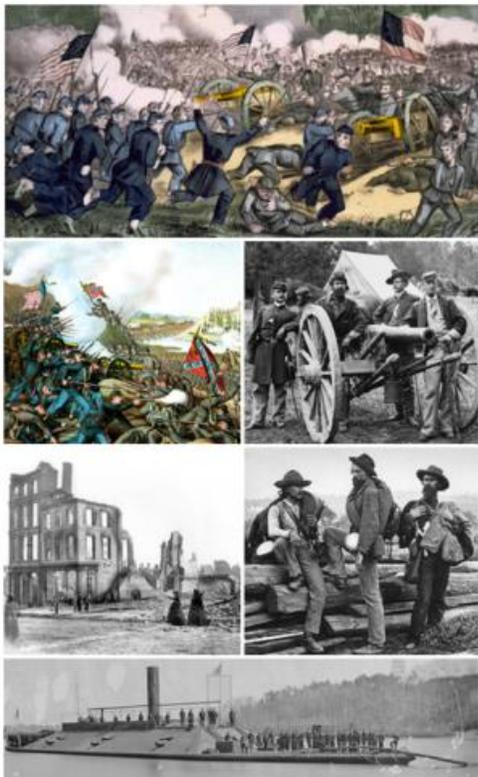
My family, the Marshes, is an old English family that dates back to the civil war. My ancestor who was my grandpa's great grandpa served in *The Civil War*. His name was William Henry Marsh. During the war, my grandfather fought on *The Union* side, as he was adamantly opposed to the continuation of slavery. He also believed in a united nation that is and even was the United States of America. During his time period, there was much dissent and succession amongst the southern states. They, the confederates, attempted to break off from America. The confederates fought and opposed the union side who were successful winning the war. He also participated in the underground - railroad, allowing for the movement of slaves into the north, thus freeing them from slavery. My grandfather was highly regarded and decorated for his activities and successes. He was quite the character, sporting a glass eye to boot. We believe that he served from the beginning of the war until 1865, or so my family believes. His actions and successes during *The Civil War* include well-known tales discussed by my family.

He was appointed Corporal soon after the organization of his Company, and in September, 1862, he was then promoted to Sergeant. Soon, he took command of the Army of the Potomac. He performed many duties of importance and trust. My grandpa Marsh went on a journey full of peril. During a rainy night, he was obliged to crawl over the ground on his hands and knees covered with deep mud for a great part of his journey. He was honored for his adventures and excursions in *The American Civil War*. His beliefs in a single United States free of slavery became a dream come true. He was honored for his activities involving and surrounding *The Civil War* especially as a soldier. So, he was decorated with metals for his trials and tribulations. It is proudly displayed in my family's living room.

William Henry Marsh was born approximately 1843 and died 1923 at age 71. In 1860, Paterson, N.Y. according to census he lived in Paterson, N.Y. with his widowed mother Wendy Adams Marsh. His father Peter Marsh died of old age. He had two brothers and two sisters. He enlisted in Brooklyn, N.Y. in Excelsior Brigade 72<sup>nd</sup>

regiment as a soldier. He fought in all major battles including Gettysburg, P.A. where he fought specifically with Gen. Sickles Brogada. He was present in the second day of the battle in the peach orchard, in which Gen. Sickles almost cost the GAR (Grand Army of the Republic) the battle when he, in error placed his troops in the wrong position. The troops rallied on the third day and came back to win the battle for *The Union* side. He was at the surrender of Lee at the end of the war.

William re-enlisted for a second term after his first enlistment was up and was a sergeant, a rank which he was honorably discharged at the end of the war. During the war, he was sick with yellow fever and it had settled in his eye, which had to be removed after the war ended. If you look carefully at his picture, you can see he has one glass eye in its place.



Figure

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:CivilWarUSAColl.png>

William was married 3 times and our lineage is traced through his second wife, Sarah, who passed away from sickness. His third wife and children from that marriage lived in Paterson, N.Y. where he was a wheel-right, then a grocer by trade. He was known by the Paterson townspeople as a great war hero. He was also the president of local veteran organizations. Also, every year he spoke at schools to children to provide education about *The Civil War*. When he passed away, the town mourned him deeply, with a front page article and pictures as well as a poem written in tribute to “Comrade Marsh”. Each year there was a parade in Washington, D.C. in which all the GAR veterans would march until there were no more veterans left alive. He returned each year to meet his comrades in battle and was proud of his service to his country.



## Katelynn Williamson



### College and Work; Finding the Balance

A great deal of college students are either full-time or part-time due to several reasons. Some students would try to complete as many credit hours that they can, whether that is 15 or 23 credit hours, and others would do the bare minimum granting them the status of a part-time student. Some college students live at home or they live on campus, some even have their own apartments whether they share it with a roommate, significant other, or a family member like a sibling. But how many college students actually work? Are these college students' part or full-time students with part-time jobs? Or do they have full-time jobs while being a full-time student? Most of all, what is their reason for having a job while they go to college while they are trying to prepare themselves for a better job.

In my case, I am a full-time college student working part-time that overall seems like a full-time job due to the hours. But this article is not about me. It is about another college student, who I had the privilege of being classmates with and having the opportunity to pick her mind about how life

is for her with her job(s) and college and her name is Ellabeth Hoke.

**Q:** How long have you been going to MVCC?

**A:** Two years, this is my fourth semester

**Q:** How many credit hours do you usually take during a semester?

**A:** Average being sixteen to eighteen credits.

**Q:** How many jobs do you have during college?

**A:** During previous semester three part-time jobs, winter break is usually two jobs, and this semester is only two jobs.

**Q:** Are you a part-time or full-time college student?

**A:** Full-time college student, part-time job-wise

**Q:** How many jobs do you have overall?

**A:** In the summer one job with five different hats, but during college, three different jobs.

**Q:** How do you fit work into your college schedule?

**A:** I keep trying to say that college is more important than my jobs, but sometimes work overshadows college.

**Q:** Do you have time to do anything for yourself or hang out with family/friends?

**A:** Well I still live at home, so I get to see my family then, friends not really. I really don't have a social life outside of work and college.

**Q:** Do you think that having a job during college helped you prioritize your time wisely?

**A:** Definitely- you always have to plan out how to get to from point A to point B, to get from job to job, how much time you are going to invest in doing homework. Setting bedtimes for yourself if you have to go to class in the morning or what not.

**Q:** Do you still live at home with your family, or do you live by yourself?

**A:** Yes, at home

**Q:** Does your family help you with any expenses that you are in a tight spot between college and your jobs?

**A:** Why I have all the jobs so they don't have too.

**Q:** Do you enjoy working and going to college at the same time?

**A:** Not really, if it was a four year college, I would put more effort into my classes and not so much work. I probably would work only weekends at most then.

**Q:** If you had a choice, would you rather not work while going to college or would you continue this set-up that you have?

**A:** Probably not work, but don't want to be a bum either.

**Q:** What made you want to work during college or was it more of a need that you have to work during college?

**A:** More of a need due to bills

**Q:** What do people usually say when you tell them how many jobs you have and then how many credit hours you are taking?

**A:** So you're a part time student, or they are mostly shock that I'm a full time student with so many jobs.

**Q:** Do you at least enjoy working at your jobs and do you think that having all of these jobs makes you a well-rounded and work-driven person?

**A:** Definitely a well-rounded person, if anything I like the people I work with because we've been through a lot together, the job itself, not so much.

**Q:** Do you ever sleep?

**A:** Yes, mostly weekends.

**Q:** How many hours do you work a week during college?

**A:** Thirty something hours, during the summer and depending on what's happening during the week roughly forty to sixty hours a week.

**Q:** Do you think that your parents are proud of you?

**A:** Definitely because I'm the youngest of the family and I don't like spending money.



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## **AUGUST 24 – DECEMBER 15**

Shuttle Schedule	Departs ROME	Arrives in and Departs UTICA	Arrives back in ROME
Shuttle 1: Morning Monday-Friday	7:45 a.m.	8:15 a.m.	8:45 a.m.
Shuttle 2: Afternoon Monday-Friday	3:45 p.m.	4:15 p.m.	4:45 p.m.
Shuttle 3: Evening Monday-Thursday	9 p.m.	9:30 p.m.	10 p.m.



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- 1**  
Fill out Reservation Form
- 2**  
Complete Commencement Survey
- 3**  
Complete Assessment Form

## Ellabeth Hoke



### Watching Anthony E. Hoke

We all have someone in our lives that is not quite up to date with current technology. Anthony E. Hoke is one man who doesn't really know how to use the iPhone or the Facebook or that "chat snap" everyone is on. We are talking about a man that can practically drive a tractor blind folded but can't work the T.V. remote.

Anthony E. Hoke was born in 1953, August 7<sup>th</sup>. He was the third child out of seven, with only one other brother and five girls. He grew up in a small town where everyone knew everyone. After graduating in 1972, Owen D. Young, he went off into the Navy. After four years, he was off the ship and went straight into welding, even opened his own business, Hoke's Welding. Even after all these years, Anthony still lives in Starkville, New York, the small town he grew up in.

Being his daughter, I have heard all the stories he likes to tell year after year, not only from him, but a couple of the locals have a few juicy stories about good ol' Anthony Hoke. I can tell you, every year the

NASCAR Daytona 500 is an important holiday in the Hoke house. It's like the "redneck" super bowl. The family comes over, you're not allowed to talk during the commentator's speech, and there is plenty of food to go around. His favorite racer, Kasey Kahne, has a cheerleader who sits in his chair next to the window every Sunday. After a few laps, a commercial break comes on, then he proceeds to tell his four kids where NASCAR came from, and when one of us asks a question, me, gets yelled at for interrupting because we obviously weren't listening. After lap 423, he starts to nod off, then when he hears another big wreck happening once again, he jumps back awake. Then after a disappointing race, with Kurt Bush winning, he gets up from his chair with a bent back and limping legs, he grabs his brick of Stewart's ice cream and waddles to his bed room, where he will fall asleep before even taking a bite.

Anthony was looking to get his pistol permitted this year, which required a look in the past. One Sunday afternoon, he decided that it was the day he would do his paper work. After going through some of the questions, he realized he needed to bring out the old documents from when he was in the Navy, high school, and his first marriage. After looking for one document for an hour, he decided that it wasn't in the right spot and needed to go to his office at the weld shop. There he would keep a desk full of old memories and important papers.

He came back to the kitchen table where his youngest son and his fiancé were also filling out the same paper work. He came back with a box full of papers and a big smile. After his wife asked what he had gathered, he pulled out all his report cards from 5<sup>th</sup> grade up to his senior year from ODY. After she apparently grabbed the wrong one, she didn't start from the beginning of his younger self, as if starting from the beginning would make the ending of his school years more understandable. They found out he wasn't very good at English and Math. He even made a note on the back of one of the report cards saying that one particular year was going to be his year. He went through the report cards making remarks about the teacher and what group he was in. He was in the yellow group, and he never liked it. He felt as if he couldn't put his full potential into school. He remembered who he sat next to in that subject and who he still talks to in 2017.

After reading all his report cards, he moved to his enlistment papers from the same box. He remembers being sworn in in the navy. How he once ate so many peaches in one sitting that to this day, if he even thinks of the fruit, he gets a stomach ache. He would tell a story how he never shot his gun in all of his four years in the Navy, but on his last night in the Navy doing his nightly guard duties, he was "playing" with his bullets and dropped one off

the side of the ship and watched it sink in the ocean. He then explains that for every bullet the military men fire or lose, they have to make a statement and write up pages of paper work. He smiles and says that wasn't going to happen, not on his last night on the ship.

This all happened around 2:00 in the morning, and Anthony decided it was in his best interest to just go and talk to his sergeant. He knocked on the sergeant's door, waking him up, and explaining to him what had happened to the missing bullet. He says he really could have gotten in trouble with his sergeant, but the sleepy man opened his desk drawer, picked up a loose bullet and threw it at Anthony and said, "Get the hell out." He walked out with a smile on his face, put the bullet in his gun, finished his shift, and went to sleep. The next day he was ready to go home to see his family.

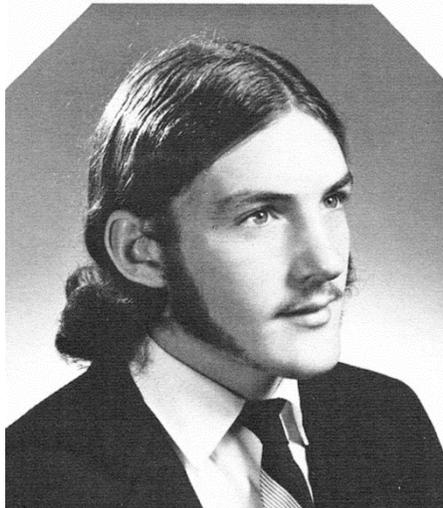
After going through his box of goodies, he tries to finish his paper work. All he has left was his references. He went

through the list aloud, explaining why that person was or wasn't a good fit for his paper work.

Even after all these years of watching him interact with his friends, family, and pets, I find that he still manages to keep it interesting. Maybe with a weird dance move only consisting of moving his upper body back and forth or a simple wrist action, he still knows how to make his children laugh.

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Anthony Eugene Hoke  
August 7, 1953  
"Consider well what your strength is and what exceeds your ability."



## Shamar Brown-Pettway



## August Anthony Alsina Jr.

August Anthony Alsina Jr. was born on September 3, 1992. He is an American recording artist from New Orleans signed to Def Jam Recordings. He is best known for his single, “I Luv This Shit” with Trinidad James. His debut studio album *Testimony* was released on April 15, 2014. On paper, you would expect August to be happy, if not straight-up ecstatic. In 2014, the rising R&B star reached No. 2 on the Billboard 200 with debut album *Testimony*. He toured with Usher and won best new artist at the BET Awards. One of his platinum-certified singles, the 2013 breakout hit “I Luv This Shit,” topped *Billboard’s R&B/Hip-Hop Mainstream Airplay* chart for two weeks.

Another, 2014’s “No Love,” which featured Nicki Minaj, has more than 100 million *Youtube* views. His sophomore LP, *This Thing Called Life*, came out Dec. 11, led by the Single “Why I Do it,” a duet with Lil Wayne in which Alsina boasts in a swaggering high tenor reminiscent of Chris Brown, “I’m eating so good, and I’m still

not done/No I ain’t stoppin’ til I got it all.” But today, sitting in a *Tex-Mex* restaurant in Brooklyn’s Bushwick neighborhood, Alsina, 24, wears grimness like body armor.

Seen on November afternoon, his eyes are currently concealed behind dark sunglasses, in the gravelly words that he dead pans in his Louisiana accent, in the funereal ensemble –black bandana, black jeans, black jacket, black Jordans, crucifix necklace –.

“I feel older than I really am,” Alsina says flatly. “It’s because of the cards I was dealt.”

In May, Alsina revealed that he is going blind. He describes how a doctor told him that he had a degenerative eye disease, and that it was steadily worsening. Initially he refused to believe it, He says, “I was like, ‘This guy tripping.’ I went to see a few doctors, but that was it and i had to accept it.” He adds, “It was a very humbling experience. You take that for granted,

waking up and being able to see. “He points towards a woman in a booth 15 ft away. “I can see her,” he says, “but I wouldn’t be able to tell you what she looked like.”

On top of that, in 2014 he was hospitalized for seizures that he blames on exhaustion. “I’m a sickly man,” he says. “I know that all of that has got to be for a reason. All this crazy shit didn’t happen to me just to happen.”

There is a desperation to how Alsina sings – not out of yearning for affections of a woman, but from a hard life. He makes

conventional R&B in a sonic sense, but lyrically, he’s like a New Orleans narcocorrido.

August Alsina is beginning 2017 on a strong footing, recently releasing the new visuals for his tracks, “Drugs”, “Wait”, and “Lonely”. While the N.O native has gotten more experimental with his creative expression over the years, both in his music and in his personal fashion tastes, most recently, a creative still from his latest videos has everyone talking.



[https://www.google.com/search?q=August+Alsina&rlz=1C1CHZL\\_enUS708US708&espv=2&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwi3r-LDhNDSAhVI54MKHVc6D8oQ\\_AUIBigB&biw=1266&bih=589#imgrc=ggIPM8eKhUeO9M:](https://www.google.com/search?q=August+Alsina&rlz=1C1CHZL_enUS708US708&espv=2&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwi3r-LDhNDSAhVI54MKHVc6D8oQ_AUIBigB&biw=1266&bih=589#imgrc=ggIPM8eKhUeO9M:)

## Alec Ambruso



### Are The Super Teams in Trouble?

Prior to this NBA season, many quickly jumped to the conclusion that the Cleveland Cavaliers and Golden State Warriors would meet once again in the NBA Finals this coming June. On July 4, 2016, Golden State supplemented and set in stone these beliefs with their addition of only the second/third best player in the league currently in Kevin Durant.

The move to get KD seemed to be the right one for the Dubs in the first half of the season—in my opinion it really wasn't, considering they went 73-9 without him the previous season—things changed when Durant went down with an MCL sprain and tibia bone bruise in his left leg. He dubbed it a basketball “boo-boo,” and still hasn't stated a return date. Since then as of the writing of this piece, the Warriors have gone 3-5, a huge difference from their 50-9 record when they had KD. The argument that the Warriors without Durant is just the team from a year ago, that broke the regular season win record—and blew a 3-1 lead—is plain wrong. This is because in order to make room for Durant, the Dubs had to cut ties with much of their supporting cast, including Leandro Barbosa, Harrison Barnes, and Andrew Bogut—more on him later. Now during this time of struggle for

Golden State, the pesky San Antonio Spurs are breathing down their necks, despite dealing with injuries of their own, and have a legitimate chance at being the first seed in the Western Conference.

Now to the defending champion Cleveland Cavaliers. Since January, they've been streaky. They've lost to teams like the New Orleans Pelicans, Sacramento Kings, and Dallas Mavericks in addition to opposing playoff-caliber teams. LeBron James has been vocal about his frustrations and demanded a playmaker, and he got one in the form of former All-Star Deron Williams. The Cavs also tested out Derrick Williams and ended up signing him through the rest of the season for his efficiency on the floor and hard effort. And in an attempt to get bigger and fill the void of Kevin Love's absence, they also signed Andrew Bogut, who debuted for The Cavs on March 6, 2017 and was ruled out the rest of the season on the same day with a fractured tibia, which happened barely a minute into his debut. This resulted in the signing of Larry Sanders, and it looks like their roster is pretty much finalized for the playoffs coming in April; however, their seed is yet to be determined with the red-hot

Washington Wizards and Boston Celtics on their tail. While Cleveland is still very much in the mix for a title, they are finally facing real challenges in the East, which makes the league a whole lot more entertaining.

These two monster teams are different animals when the playoffs come, and they still may very well meet each other for a third straight year come June 1st. However, it is still alarming to see the two powerhouses of the NBA being challenged

in their respective conferences. Though it may just be a tease and the playoffs may just shake out the way people believed from the get-go, their vulnerabilities right now just show that their time of dominance may soon end, and fans of the 28 other teams will be very happy. I can't speak for the Knicks fans though – that team is just a mess.



## Frank Bianco



### Bemoaning in D-Flat (Why Modern Pop Music Is Not Good)

I can already hear the collective groans of the people who have stumbled upon this article before I have even typed the first sentence.

“Wow—another out-of-touch whinny little music critic has made an article about how the music that *I* like is awful and how the music that *he* likes is better, and that he wants me to ‘see the error in my ways’ and make me think differently—*how original.*”

Before proceeding, let me make one thing clear: While I am expressing my personal opinions about the general landscape of the music industry, it is not done with the intention of objectifying anyone for what they like or to incite anger. If you like something, don’t be ashamed of it, and don’t let others persuade you to think differently if you’re not comfortable in switching viewpoints. Change comes from within the self, after all.

With that said, here are my reasons as to why modern pop music sucks:

#### 1. Plastic Perfection

You may have heard a lot of people say this in one form or another: “It all sounds the same!” I agree with this statement, but here’s my reasoning: In the studio, modern artists and their producers will correct any blemished note accidentally made by an instrument – if they use real instruments – and any faltered delivery in the vocals of the singer. This robs the listener of raw emotion—the spellbinding “feel” that can stick with someone for a long time—and leaves them with a plastic feeling that can be applied to virtually any other song.

Take for instance – and excuse me for stepping over the threshold of most of your comfort zones, that being the mention of any music made before 1980 – Charlie Parker’s recording of “Lover Man” that he recorded for *Dial*. Upon listening to the recording, most would

agree that it is not good, as Bird was much too loaded to play to the best of his capabilities, but it's the raw emotion of a hurt soul transposed into an instrument that makes the recording all the more beautifully haunting. The same can be said for music that has a happy tone as well.

## 2. "Live" Performances

Virtually all modern artists perform while the studio tracks to their songs are filtered through the speakers. The only "Live" moments that occur are when the artist speaks to the crowd, and the often overly theatrical and choreographed dance routines which are highlighted by lighting effects, costume showcases, and various other adjuncts that tend to overshadow what should be the main reason why anyone would go to a live concert – for the music. Also, if all you're hearing is the studio track, just being played loud enough to echo in the venue, then what's the point of blowing money on expensive tickets if you can listen to the same exact thing at home or in your car at a comparatively inexpensive cost?

## 3. The Artist's Goal in the Business

There is the question: Is the artist in it for the Music, or for the money/celebrity of being an artist/musician? You see so many cases of modern artists starting off in the music business and then all of a sudden, after

getting a taste of fame, they switch gears and begin to do things unrelated to music, like acting in movies or starring in commercials.

In regard to starring in a commercial, I believe that Bill Hicks said it best: "Here's the deal folks: You do a commercial—you're off the *Artistic Roll Call*. Forever. End of story. Okay? You're another corporate shill, there's a price on your head, and everything you say is suspect." How much more money do you need? —Are the royalties from your body of work not enough to create a sense of humility, that you have to stir the commercialist pot of *Bovine America* as Hicks calls it? Adam Levine, Katy Perry, and Alicia Keys praising achene-removal creams, Blake Shelton and Justin Bieber lauding different brands of underwear, Dr. Dre becoming more known for a set of headphones than his days in the N.W.A. – the list goes on and on, and sometimes comes back to bite the artists—anyone remember what happened to Michael Jackson when he really wanted to tell everybody how much he liked *Pepsi*?

I wrote this article for the sake of sharing my personal viewpoints. Let me reiterate—I don't care if you disagree with me, and you shouldn't care that I disagree with you. Life is full of differences in opinion, and you should always remember, you don't have to take anything to heart if you don't want to.

# Sudoku

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